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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 002093

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TAGS: PREL PGOV PNAT ASEC ID

SUBJECT: PAPUA--SEPARATIST'S FUNERAL PASSES PEACEFULLY BUT  
REGION STILL TENSE

REF: JAKARTA 2070 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

**¶1.** (C) SUMMARY: The Timika region of south-central Papua remains tense following the funeral of well-known separatist leader Kelly Kwalik who died in a shootout with police. Some local leaders have condemned the police action and maintained that Kwalik was not involved in violent separatist activities. Pro-independence activists have called for further protests and there have been a few minor incidents of conflict with the police. The police appear, so far, to have the situation under control. However, the possibility of further incidents or attacks remains real in the Timika area, which is home to the mining operations of Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold. Given the decentralized and fragmented nature of Papuan separatist groups, Kwalik's death will likely have little impact beyond that immediate area. END SUMMARY.

MINOR INCIDENTS, SO FAR

**¶2.** (C) There have been a few minor incidents following the death of Free Papua Movement (OPM) leader in a December 16 shootout with police (see reftel). On December 19 several traditional leaders and regional legislators addressed a crowd of 300-400 that had gathered outside the regional legislature (DPRD) building, where Kwalik's coffin was on display for the public to pay their respects. The speakers condemned the police shooting and maintained that Kwalik was not involved in the series of shooting attacks on the mining operations of U.S.-based Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold. (Note: Some members of the local assembly are highly critical of Jakarta's policy toward Papua and have called for a referendum on the region's independence.) Following the speeches, the crowd pelted nearby police with rocks. The police fired into the air and dispersed the crowd. There were no reports of serious injuries either among the police or the protesters.

**¶3.** (C) Kwalik's body remained at the DPRD building for several days pending resolution of a dispute within his clan over the burial location. Local traditional leaders draped Kwalik's coffin with the Morning Star flag, which Indonesian authorities have banned as a separatist symbol. In most cases, the authorities have arrested and prosecuted Papuans for flying the flag. However, our contacts speculated that police permitted use of the flag in this case so as not to further inflame an already volatile situation.

FURTHER INCIDENTS, ATTACKS REMAIN POSSIBLE

**¶4.** (C) Timika's Catholic Bishop John Saklil led a funeral

mass on December 21, which passed without incident. Kwalik's burial, which occurred late on December 22, also passed peacefully. Some pro-independence activists have called for Papuans in the Timika area to blockade Freeport's operations in an effort to shut the mine down. However, the police are maintaining a highly visible but restrained security posture and appear to have the situation under control. The authorities released five people, including a 10-year old boy, who were detained during the raid in which Kwalik was killed.

¶5. (C) Further shootings aimed at Freeport's operations also remain possible. A particular danger, according to our contacts in the Papua provincial government, is that other aspiring OPM commanders will stage attacks in order to bolster their claim to be Kwalik's successor.

#### LITTLE CHANGE LIKELY OUTSIDE TIMIKA

¶6. (C) Kwalik's death will likely have little impact on the OPM outside of the Timika area. The group remains highly fractured along ethnic and tribal lines. Kwalik, an ethnic Amungme, had little authority beyond his fellow kinsmen around Timika. Despite his limited geographical writ, Kwalik rose to particular prominence because the Amungme have mounted the most persistent claims to traditional ownership of the land that contains Freeport's mining operations. As a result, Kwalik's attacks have usually targeted the high-profile international company.

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